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1976/09/15

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Authority NND979620By EE NARA Date 7/18/87

TELEGRAM

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Peking 1843

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S E C R E T PEKING 1843

EXDIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR GATES

E.O. 11652; XGDS-3

TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A) PFOR, CH

SUBJECT: ASSESSMENT OF SCHLESINGER VISIT

REFS: A) SECTO 27032, B) PEKING 1761, C) PEKING 1776
D) PEKING 1782, E) PEKING 1808

1. BEGIN INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY. THERE FOLLOWS MY
PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHLESINGER VISIT (REF A) BASED ON
MY PRIVATE ONE-HOUR TALK WITH HIM AT USLO SEPTEMBER 14 (HE
CALLED ON ME AT HIS INITIATIVE) AND OUR EARLIER REPORTING ON HIS
ACTIVITIES IN PEKING. AFTER MAO'S DEATH THE PARAMOUNT OBJECTIVES
IN CHINESE HANDLING OF SCHLESINGER BECAME:

--TO DEMONSTRATE FOREIGN POLICY CONTINUITY. REINSTATEMENT OF
SCHLESINGER'S PROVINCIAL TRIP, INCLUDING THE EXCURSION TO THE SINO-
SOVIET FRONTIER, HIGHLIGHTS CONTINUED CHINESE ADHERENCE TO
"CHAIRMAN MAO'S REVOLUTIONARY LINE IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS" WITH ITS
ANTI-SOVIET TILT.

--TO REPUDIATE IMPLICITLY SPECULATION THAT MAO'S DEATH WOULD
PROVE DESTABILIZING.

REGARDLESS OF WHAT WE MAY
OTHERWISE FEEL ABOUT CHINESE HANDLING OF SCHLESINGER, THE POLICY
IMPLICATIONS FOR THE U.S. ARE GENERALLY POSITIVE.

EXCLUSION OF USLO FROM THE TALKS SEEMED TO ACCORD WITH SCHLESINGER'S
OWN PREFERENCE. CHINESE FAILURE TO INCLUDE USLO IN CHIAO'S
WELCOMING BANQUET IS ODD, BUT WE DO NOT YET HAVE ALL THE FACTS
THAT PERTAIN. AS FOR SCHLESINGER'S FUNERAL ROLE, WE DO NOT SHARE
VIEW OF SOME IN HIS PARTY THAT CHINESE HEART THIS AS SNUB DIRECTED
AT USG.

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I WOULD EMPHASIZE THAT THE POTENTIALLY MOST SIGNIFICANT ASPECTS OF HIS VISIT ARE YET TO COME: HIS BOTH SYMBOLIC AND SUBSTANTIVE--OF HIS VISIT ARE YET TO COME: HIS EXCURSION TO THE SINO-SOVIET BORDER AND HIS PROMISED SESSIONS WITH RANYING CHINESE LEADERS INCLUDING PREMIER HUA KUO-FENG. I SHALL SUBMIT A FINAL ASSESSMENT AFTER SCHLESINGER'S DEPARTURE FROM PEKING, PLANNED FOR SEPTEMBER 29. END INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY.

3. CHINESE DISPLAY EXTRAORDINARY ESTEEM FOR SCHLESINGER. FROM CONDUCT OF PRELIMINARY TRIP ARRANGEMENTS IN THE U.S. TO REINSTATEMENT OF THE TRIP FOLLOWING MAO'S FUNERAL, THE CHINESE HAVE MISSED NO OPPORTUNITY TO CONVEY THEIR HIGH ESTEEM FOR SCHLESINGER:

--THEY CONFIRMED HIS ITINERARY PRIOR TO HIS DELEGATION'S DEPARTURE, AN UNPRECEDENTED BREAK WITH CUSTOMARY CHINESE NEGOTIATING PRACTICE WITH SUCH GROUPS. (SCHLESINGER'S INTER-MEDIARIES WITH THE CHINESE HAD STRESSED THAT PRIOR APPROVAL WAS THE SINE QUA NON OF SCHLESINGER'S ACCEPTANCE OF THE INVITATION.)

--THEY INCLUDED ON THE ITINERARY SENSITIVE AREAS OFTEN REQUEST BUT NEVER PREVIOUSLY GRANTED TO AMERICANS (LHASA, INING, JUKHHAOTE).

--THEY ARRANGED UNUSUALLY HIGH-LEVEL MEETINGS, ALLOCATING TO SCHLESINGER TWO AFTERNOONS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER CHIAO (ONE IS THE NORM) AND PLANNING, BEFORE MAO'S DEATH INTERVENED, SESSIONS WITH DEFENSE MINISTER YEH CHIEN-YING AND PREMIER HUA KUO-FENG.

--MEMBERS OF THE PARTY TOLD US THAT FOLLOWING ANNOUNCEMENT OF MAO'S DEATH, FOREIGN MINISTRY AMERICAS AND OCEANIAS DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR LIN PING CONFIDED TO SCHLESINGER THAT CHAIRMAN MAO HAD PERSONALLY ORDERED AN INVITATION EXTENDED TO HINBIN 1974. LIN ADDED THAT MAO WAS INFORMED BEFORE HIS DEATH OF SCHLESINGER'S PRESENCE IN CHINA.

--AFTER CANCELLING THE TOUR AND REMAINING MEETINGS IN PEKING UPON WORD THAT MAO HAD DIED, THE CHINESE REVERSED THEMSELVES, REINSTATED THE WHOLE PROVINCIAL PROGRAM AND HINTED STRONGLY THAT SCHLESINGER ON HIS RETURN TO PEKING WOULD MEET WITH PREMIER HUA AND EITHER DEFENSE MINISTER YEH OR POLITBURO STANDING COMMITTEE MEMBER CHANG CHUN-CHIAO.

4. ON HIS FIRST EVENING IN PEKING SCHLESINGER ASKED THE ACTING CHIEF FOR USLO'S ASSESSMENT OF CHINESE MOTIVES AND EXPECTATIONS FOR HIS VISIT. WE BELIEVE THAT THE RATIONALE IS SELF-EVIDENT: THE CHINESE POSITION ON U.S.-SOVIET DETENTE PARALLELS SCHLESINGER'S PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND WELL-KNOWN PRIVATE VIEWS ON THE ISSUE. THAT THESE VIEWS WOULD BE AIRED TO CHINESE AND WORLD AUDIENCES WAS A REASONABLE EXPECTATION; THE POTENT COMBINATION OF HIGH-LEVEL MEETINGS, A NOVEL EXCURSION TO TIBET AND TO THE SINO-SOVIET FRONTIER, AND A CORPS OF ACCOMPANYING JOURNALISTS GUARANTEED HEAVY MEDIA PLAY IN THE U.S. AND MANY OTHER COUNTRIES. IN THIS SENSE THE CHINESE CAST SCHLESINGER IN THE FAMILIAR ROLE (E.G. THE FRG'S STRAUSS AND FORMER PRESIDENT NIXON) OF PRESTIGIOUS OPPOSITION STATESMAN WHO SHARES A KEY PART OF THE CHINESE WORLDVIEW.

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5. WHETHER THE CHINESE SEEK MERELY TO GAIN ATTENTION FOR THEIR VIEWS, TO INFLUENCE AMERICAN ELECTION-YEAR POLITICS, OR TO REGISTER SOME GENERAL DISENCHANTMENT WITH CURRENT ADMINISTRATION FOREIGN POLICIES IS CONJECTURAL. ALL PROBABLY ENTERED INTO INITIAL CHINESE CALCULATIONS TO SOME DEGREE. (POST-MAO CONSIDERATION ARE NOTED IN MY SUMMARY ABOVE.)

6. THE EXCLUSION OF USLO. USLO'S ONLY FORMAL ROLE IN THE SCHLESINGER VISIT HAS BEEN ATTENDANCE BY THE ACTING CHIEF AT A NOON-HOUR WELCOMING BANQUET THE FIRST DAY GIVEN BY THE NOMINAL HOSTS. CHINESE PEOPLE'S INSTITUTE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. ACCORDING TO ONE MEMBER OF THE PARTY, THE CHINESE SAID THEY DID NOT PLAN TO INVITE ACTING CHIEF TO CHIAO'S BANQUET THAT EVENING BECAUSE OF THE BANQUET'S ALLEGED "SPECIAL NATURE." WE DOUBT THAT THE VISITORS URGED RECONSIDERATION. USLO WAS NOT INVITED TO SEND A REPRESENTATIVE TO THE SUBSTANTIVE MEETINGS. WE DO NOT KNOW WHEN AND HOW EITHER DECISION WAS REACHED, BUT WE IMAGINE THAT THE CHINESE WELCOMED AND NURTURED SUPPOSITION ON THE PART OF SCHLESINGER AND SOME MEMBERS OF HIS PARTY THAT THESE OCCASIONS WERE LIKELY TO BE MORE CANDID AND PRODUCTIVE THAN USG OFFICIALS.

7. THE SCHLESINGER DELEGATION AND FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS. WE ARE DISINCLINED TO ATTACH MUCH IMPORTANCE TO SCHLESINGER'S PLACE AMONG FOREIGNERS PAYING LAST RESPECTS TO MAO.

--NCNA LISTS THE SCHLESINGER GROUP AMONG OTHER "FOREIGN FRIENDS" INCLUDING AN ALBANIAN METALLURGICAL GROUP, THE PANISTAS FOREIGN SECRETARY, A VENEZUELAN CULTURAL GROUP, AND ATHLETES FROM JAPAN, TANZANIA, AND EGYPT.

--SCHLESINGER IS LISTED LAST BY NCNA AMONG FOREIGNERS SENDING MEMORIAL WREATHS, BEHIND THE VENEZUELAN CULTURAL GROUP, JAPANESE PEASANTS, AND SHIRLEY AND DAVID DUBOIS.

ON BALANCE, THE FACT THAT SCHLESINGER SHOOK HANDS WITH PREMIER HUA, VICE CHAIRMAN WANG HUNG-WEN, ET AL. AT THE CEREMONIES SEEMS THE PRODUCT OF AN OVERALL FUNERAL PLAN FOR DEALING WITH DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF FOREIGNERS. USLO WAS IN THE SAME CATEGORY AS WESTERN AND JAPANESE EMBASSIES.

8. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER THE CHINESE WILL RAISE THE TAIWAN ISSUE WITH SCHLESINGER. SCHLESINGER CONFERRED TO ME THAT FOREIGN MINISTER CHIAO SKIMMED OVER IT IN PERFUNCTORY FASHION.

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